

Microsoft Exchange hack caused by China, U.S. and allies say

By ERIC TUCKER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration and Western allies formally blamed China on Monday for a massive hack of Microsoft Exchange email server software and asserted that criminal hackers associated with the Chinese government have carried out ransomware and other illicit cyber operations.

The announcements, though not accompanied by sanctions against the Chinese government, were intended as a forceful condemnation of activities a senior Biden administration official described as part of a "pattern of irresponsible behavior in cyberspace." They highlighted the ongoing threat from Chinese hackers even as the administration remains consumed with trying to curb ransomware attacks from Russia-based syndicates that have targeted critical infrastructure.

The broad range of cyberthreats from Beijing disclosed on Monday included a ransomware attack from government-affiliated hackers that has targeted victims — including in the U.S. — with demands for millions of dollars. U.S. officials also alleged that criminal contract hackers associated with China's Ministry of State Security have engaged in cyber extortion schemes and theft for their own profit.

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In this Jan. 28, 2020, file photo, a Microsoft computer is among items displayed at a Microsoft store in suburban Boston.

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Microsoft Exchange hack caused by China, U.S. and allies say

Continued from Front

Meanwhile, the Justice Department on Monday announced charges against four Chinese nationals who prosecutors said were working with the MSS in a hacking campaign that targeted dozens of computer systems, including companies, universities and government entities. The defendants are accused of stealing trade secrets and confidential business information.

Unlike in April, when public finger-pointing of Russian hacking was paired with a raft of sanctions against Moscow, the Biden administration did not announce any actions against Beijing. Nonetheless, a senior administration official who briefed reporters said that the U.S. has confronted senior Chinese officials and that the White House regards the multination shaming as sending an important message.

President Joe Biden told reporters "the investigation's not finished," and White House press secretary Jen Psaki did not rule out consequences for China, saying, "This is not the conclusion of our efforts as it relates to cyber activities with China or Russia."

Even without fresh sanctions, Monday's actions are likely to exacerbate tensions with China at a delicate time. Just last week, the U.S. issued separate stark warnings against transactions with entities that operate in China's western Xinjiang region, where China is accused of repressing Uyghur Muslims and other minorities.

Then on Friday, the administration advised American firms of the deteriorating investment and commercial environment in Hong

Kong, where China has been cracking down on democratic freedoms it had pledged to respect in

state-backed groups was a reckless but familiar pattern of behaviour," U.K. Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab

official said was "the kind of aggressive behavior that we're seeing coming out of China."

moonlighting and engaging in other activities that could put money in their pockets."

The Microsoft Exchange hack that months ago compromised tens of thousands of computers around the world was swiftly attributed to Chinese cyber spies by private sector groups. An administration official said the government's attribution to hackers affiliated with the Ministry of State Security took until now in part because of the discovery of the ransomware and for-profit hacking operations and because the administration wanted to pair the announcement with guidance for businesses about tactics that the Chinese have been using.

Given the scope of the attack, Alperovitch said it was "puzzling" that the U.S. avoided sanctions.

"They certainly deserve it, and at this point, it's becoming a glaring standout that we have not," he said.

He added, in a reference to a large Russian cyberespionage operation discovered late last year, "There's no question that the Exchange hacks have been more reckless, more dangerous and more disruptive than anything the Russians have done in SolarWinds."

A spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in Washington did not immediately return an email seeking comment Monday.

But a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson has previously deflected blame for the Microsoft Exchange hack, saying that China "firmly opposes and combats cyber attacks and cyber theft in all forms" and cautioning that attribution of cyberattacks should be based on evidence and not "groundless accusations." □



A man looks at his smartphone as he walks by the Microsoft office in Beijing, China on Friday, Aug. 7, 2020. A man looks at his smartphone as he walks by the Microsoft office in Beijing, China on Friday, Aug. 7, 2020.

Associated Press

the former British colony. The European Union and Britain also called out China. The EU said malicious cyber activities with "significant effects" that targeted government institutions, political organizations and key industries in the bloc's 27 member states could be linked to Chinese hacking groups.

The U.K.'s National Cyber Security Centre said the groups targeted maritime industries and naval defense contractors in the U.S. and Europe and the Finnish parliament.

In a statement, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said the hacking was "conducted from the territory of China for the purpose of intellectual property theft and espionage."

The Microsoft Exchange cyberattack "by Chinese

said. NATO, in its first public condemnation of China for hacking activities, called on Beijing to uphold its international commitments and obligations "and to act responsibly in the international system, including in cyberspace."

The alliance said it was determined to "actively deter, defend against and counter the full spectrum of cyber threats."

That hackers affiliated with the Ministry of State Security were engaged in ransomware was surprising and concerning to the U.S. government, the senior administration official said.

But the attack, in which an unidentified American company received a high-dollar ransom demand, also gave U.S. officials new insight into what the of-

The majority of the most damaging and high-profile recent ransomware attacks have involved Russian criminal gangs.

Though the U.S. has sometimes seen connections between Russian intelligence agencies and individual hackers, the use of criminal contract hackers by the Chinese government "to conduct unsanctioned cyber operations globally is distinct," the official said.

Dmitri Alperovitch, the former chief technology officer of the cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike, said the announcement makes clear that MSS contractors who for years have worked for the government and conducted operations on their behalf have over time decided — either with the approval or the "blind eye of their bosses" — to "start

Watchdog: Ross misled on reason for citizenship question

By **MIKE SCHNEIDER**

Associated Press

President Donald Trump's commerce secretary misled Congress about why he sought to add a citizenship question to the 2020 Census, according to an investigation from the Office of Inspector General, but President Joe Biden's Justice Department has decided not to prosecute. The watchdog agency's probe showed that Wilbur Ross misrepresented the reason for adding a citizenship question to the census questionnaire during two appearances before House committees in March 2018, according to a letter sent last week to congressional leaders by Inspector General Peggy Gustafson. It is a federal crime to make false statements before Congress. The results of the inspector general's investigation were presented to the Department of Justice, but department attorneys declined prosecution, the letter said.

The Department of Justice on Monday declined to comment. No one answered the phone Monday at a Palm Beach, Florida number listed for Ross nor responded to an emailed inquiry. The Supreme Court eventually blocked adding the query ahead of the 2020 census, but critics say



In this March 10, 2020, file photo, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross testifies before a House Appropriations subcommittee on Capitol Hill, in Washington.

that by pursuing the citizenship question, the Trump administration sought to suppress participation by noncitizens and minorities in the nation's once-a-decade head count.

According to critics, the citizenship question was inspired by the late Republican redistricting expert Tom Hofeller, who had previously written that using citizen voting-age population instead of the total population for the purpose of redrawing of congressional and legislative districts could be advantageous

to Republicans and non-Hispanic whites.

The inspector general probe was launched in 2019 at the request of Democratic congressional leaders who said they were concerned that the Trump administration had hidden the role of the Republican redistricting expert while trying to add a citizenship question to the census questionnaire. The Commerce Department oversees the Census Bureau, which compiles and crunches the numbers used to determine political

power and the distribution of federal funds.

The inspector general's report confirmed the conclusions of a congressional investigation about the Trump administration's "illegal efforts" to add a citizenship question to the census, said U.S. Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney, chairwoman of the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

"Lying to Congress is unacceptable, and the IG did the right thing by referring Secretary Ross's conduct to the Justice Department," said Maloney, D-NY.

"It is appalling that the Trump Administration subjected an undertaking as important as the decennial census to brazen political manipulation."

The inspector general investigation was unable to establish that Hofeller played a major role in the attempt to add the citizenship question to the census form, Gustafson's letter said.

During his congressional testimony, Ross testified that the Department of Justice requested adding the citizenship question to the census form in late 2017 for the purpose of enforcing federal voting rights law. But the inspector general probe said that "misrepresented the full rationale" since Wilbur's staff had been communicating with the Department of Justice many months before the request was made.

The evidence suggested that the Commerce Department requested and played a part in drafting the Department of Justice request, the inspector general probe found.

A memorandum Ross sent to Commerce Department officials said he had been considering adding the citizenship question soon after Trump appointed him to lead the department, according to the probe. □

Associated Press

Garland bars prosecutors from seizing reporters' records

By **E. TUCKER/M. BALSAMO**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Attorney General Merrick Garland on Monday formally prohibited federal prosecutors from seizing the records of journalists in leak investigations, with limited exceptions, reversing years of department policy. The new policy largely codifies the commitment Garland made in June, when he said the Justice Department would abandon the practice of seizing reporters' records in leak investigations. It aims to resolve a politically

thorny issue that has long vexed Justice Department prosecutors trying to weigh the media's First Amendment rights against government's desire to protect classified information. But the memo makes clear that federal prosecutors can, in some cases, seize journalists' records, including if the reporters are suspected of working for agents of a foreign power or terrorist organizations. There is also an exception for situations with imminent risks, like kidnappings or crimes against children. Garland was moved to

act following an outcry over revelations that the department during the Trump administration had obtained records belonging to journalists at The Washington Post, CNN and The New York Times as part of investigations into who had disclosed government secrets related to the Russia investigation and other national security matters.

Garland's announcement came after President Joe Biden said he would not allow the Justice Department to seize journalists' phone records and



In this June 25, 2021 file photo, Attorney General Merrick Garland speaks during a news conference on voting rights at the Department of Justice in Washington.

Associated Press

emails, calling the practice "wrong." Since then, Garland and other senior Justice Department staffers have met with representatives of news media organizations, with both

sides agreeing on the need for new department policies. Garland has also said he would support federal legislation to add additional protections for journalists. □

Capitol rioter who breached Senate gets 8 months for felony

By **MICHAEL TARM**
AP Legal Affairs Writer

A Florida man who breached the U.S. Senate chamber carrying a Trump campaign flag was sentenced Monday to eight months behind bars, the first resolution for a felony case in the Capitol insurrection.

Paul Allard Hodgkins apologized and said he was ashamed of his actions on Jan. 6. Speaking calmly from a prepared text, he described being caught up in the euphoria as he walked down Washington's most famous avenue, then followed a crowd of hundreds into the Capitol.

"If I had any idea that the protest ... would escalate (the way) it did ... I would never have ventured farther than the sidewalk of Pennsylvania Avenue," Hodgkins told the judge. He added: "This was a foolish decision on my part."

Prosecutors had asked for Hodgkins to serve 18 months behind bars, saying in a recent filing that he, "like each rioter, contributed to the collective threat to democracy" by forcing lawmakers to temporarily abandon their certification of Joe Biden's 2020 election victory over President Donald Trump and to scramble



In this file image from U.S. Capitol Police video, Paul Allard Hodgkins, 38, of Tampa, Fla., front, stands in the well on the floor of the U.S. Senate on Jan. 6, 2021, at the Capitol in Washington.

Associated Press

for shelter from incoming mobs.

In pronouncing the sentence, Judge Randolph Moss said that Hodgkins had played a role, if not as significant as others, in one of the worst episodes in American history. Still he chose to give Hodgkins a year less in prison.

"That was not, by any stretch of the imagination, a protest," Moss said. "It was ... an assault on democracy." He added: "It left a stain that will remain on us ... on the country for

years to come."

The sentencing could set the bar for punishments of hundreds of other defendants as they decide whether to accept plea deals or go to trial. Hodgkins and others are accused of serious crimes but were not indicted, as some others were, for roles in larger conspiracies. Under an agreement with prosecutors, he pleaded guilty last month to one count of obstructing an official proceeding, which carries a maximum 20-year prison sentence.

In exchange, prosecutors agreed to drop lesser charges, including entering a restricted building and disorderly conduct.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Mona Sedky said that, while Hodgkins didn't engage in violence himself, he walked among many who did in what she called "the ransacking of the People's House." And as he walked by smashed police barriers, he could see the smoke of tear gas and the chaos ahead of him.

"What does he do?" she

asked the court. "He walks toward it. He doesn't walk away."

She added that Hodgkins was in the midst of a mob that forced lawmakers to seek shelter and some congressional staffers to hide in fear, locked in officers as hundreds swept through the building. Those in fear for their lives that day will, she said, "bear emotional scars for many years if not forever."

Hodgkins was never accused of assaulting anyone or damaging property. And prosecutors said he deserves some leniency for taking responsibility almost immediately and pleading guilty to the obstruction charge. But they also noted how he boarded a bus in his hometown of Tampa bound for a Jan. 6 Trump rally carrying rope, protective goggles and latex gloves in a backpack saying that demonstrated he came to Washington prepared for violence. Video footage shows Hodgkins wearing a Trump 2020 T-shirt, the flag flung over his shoulder and eye goggles around his neck, inside the Senate. He took a selfie with a self-described shaman in a horned helmet and other rioters on the dais behind him. □

Chief: Bomb squad caused Los Angeles fireworks explosion

By **STEFANIE DAZIO**
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Los Angeles bomb technicians grossly miscalculated the weight of homemade fireworks last month when they detonated them in a containment chamber, causing a catastrophic explosion that injured 17 people and rocked a neighborhood, the police chief said Monday. Chief Michel Moore said five members of the department's bomb squad have been removed from field duties as the investigation continues. They could face discipline. The explosion was highly unusual, officials say, and has prompted the Los Angeles Police Department and FBI

to review police protocols regarding the detonation of explosives. The Police Department is now requiring a captain to sign off on detonations, in addition to the two bomb technicians and a supervisor who are

already required. Residents in the neighborhood have called for accountability and asked why some people were still in their homes, despite a door-to-door evacuation order. Fireworks are illegal to sell or

possess in Los Angeles and in unincorporated areas of the county.

The explosion came after police had spent the day disposing of thousands of pounds (kilograms) of commercial-grade fireworks that were found in a South Los Angeles home following an early-morning tip. Those fireworks were detonated at an off-site location. However, officers also found homemade fireworks that were leaking and the bomb squad decided to detonate them in the neighborhood believing they were too unstable to transport elsewhere. They examined them by X-ray and robotics and loaded them into the

detonation chamber, officially called a total containment vessel. The bomb technicians without using a scale, as is allowed by Los Angeles police procedures to avoid additional handling of the unstable devices estimated the weight of the homemade explosives and a countercharge to be about 16.5 pounds (7.5 kilograms). Federal authorities who weighed the remains after the blast calculated that the weight was actually more than 42 pounds (19 kilograms).

The smaller explosives were actually 1.37 ounces (38.9 grams) and the larger ones were about 5 ounces (142 grams). □



In this July 1, 2021 file photo Police officers walk past the remains of an armored Los Angeles Police Department tractor-trailer, after illegal fireworks seized at a South Los Angeles home exploded, in South Los Angeles.

Associated Press

Canada to let vaccinated U.S. citizens enter country on Aug. 9

By **ROB GILLIES**

Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Canada announced Monday it will begin letting fully vaccinated U.S. citizens into Canada on Aug. 9, and those from the rest of the world on Sept. 7.

Officials said the 14-day quarantine requirement will be waived as of Aug. 9 for eligible travelers who are currently residing in the United States and have received a full course of a COVID-19 vaccine approved for use in Canada. Public Safety Minister Bill Blair, who said he spoke with U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas on Friday, said the U.S. has not yet indicated any plan to change current restrictions at the land border. Canadians are able to fly into the United States with a negative COVID-19 test.

Asked in Washington if the U.S. would reciprocate, White House press secretary Jen Psaki said, "We are continuing to review our travel restrictions. Any decisions about resuming travel will be guided by our public health and medical experts. ... I wouldn't look at it through a reciprocal



In this March 16, 2020, file photo, vehicles enter the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel in Detroit to travel to Canada.

Associated Press

intention."

Canadian officials also announced that children who aren't vaccinated but are travelling with vaccinated parents won't have to quarantine, but will have to avoid group activities.

Transport Minister Omar Alghabara also said a ban on direct flights from India will be extended to Aug. 21 because of the delta variant. "The situation in India is still very serious," he said.

Trudeau said last week that Canada could start allowing fully vaccinated Americans into the country as of mid-August for nonessential travel and should be in a position to welcome fully vaccinated travelers from all countries by early September.

Canada leads G20 countries in vaccination rates, with approximately 80% of eligible Canadians vaccinated with their first dose

and over 50% of those eligible fully vaccinated.

In the early days of the pandemic, the U.S. and Canadian governments closed the more than 5,500-mile (8,800-kilometer) border to nonessential traffic. With increasing vaccination rates and dropping infection rates, some were annoyed the two governments hadn't laid out plans to fully reopen the border. Canada began easing

its restrictions earlier this month, allowing fully vaccinated Canadians or permanent legal residents to return Canada without quarantining. But among the requirements are a negative test for the virus before returning, and another once they get back. Pressure has been mounting on Canada to continue to ease the restrictions at the border, which have been in effect since March 2020. Providing exemptions for travel into Canada amid the pandemic is politically sensitive and Trudeau is expected to call a federal election next month.

Canadian officials have said they would like 75% of eligible Canadian residents to be fully vaccinated before loosening border restrictions for tourists and business travelers. The Canadian government expects to have enough vaccine delivered for 80% of eligible Canadians to be fully vaccinated by the end of July. The U.S. only allowed for exports of vaccines into Canada in early May. Commercial traffic has gone back and forth normally between the two countries since the start of the pandemic. □

U.N. rights chief alarmed by reported use of powerful spyware

BERLIN (AP) — The United Nations' human rights chief voiced alarm Monday over the reported use of military-grade malware from Israel-based NSO Group to spy on journalists, human rights activists and political dissidents.

U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet's comments came after an investigation by a global media consortium based on leaked targeting data provided further evidence of the malware's use.

"Revelations regarding the apparent widespread use of the Pegasus software to spy on journalists, human rights defenders, politicians and others in a variety of countries are extremely alarming, and seem to confirm some of

the worst fears about the potential misuse of surveillance technology to illegally undermine people's human rights," Bachelet said in a statement released in Geneva.

Given that that software and others "enable extremely deep intrusions into people's devices, resulting in insights into all aspects of their lives, their use can only ever be justified in the context of investigations into serious crimes and grave security threats," she said.

"If the recent allegations about the use of Pegasus are even partly true, then that red line has been crossed again and again with total impunity."

From a list of more than 50,000 cellphone numbers obtained by the Paris-

based journalism nonprofit Forbidden Stories and the human rights group Amnesty International and shared with 16 news organizations, journalists were able to identify more than 1,000 individuals in 50 countries who were allegedly selected by NSO clients for potential surveillance. They include 189 journalists, more than 600 politicians and government officials, at least 65 business executives, 85 human rights activists and several heads of state, according to The Washington Post, a consortium member. The journalists work for organizations including The Associated Press, Reuters, CNN, The Wall Street Journal, Le Monde and The Financial Times.

Amnesty also reported



In this Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2020 file photo Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, speaks during a press conference at the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

Associated Press

that its forensic researchers had determined that NSO Group's flagship Pegasus spyware was successfully installed on the phone of Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi's fiancée, Hathi-

ce Cengiz, just four days after he was killed in the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul in 2018. The company had previously been implicated in other spying on Khashoggi. □

Nicaragua marks 1979 revolution date with opponents jailed

MANAGUA, Nicaragua

(AP) — The Nicaraguan government organized rallies and festivities Monday to mark the anniversary of the July 19, 1979, revolution that overthrew dictator Anastasio Somoza. But with most opposition leaders jailed, many Nicaraguans say President Daniel Ortega is acting much like Somoza did 42 years ago. Several of the leading Sandinista revolutionaries who fought alongside Ortega in 1979 have now been jailed by him. Most of those arrested in a crackdown that began in late May are being held incommunicado, at undisclosed locations with no access to lawyers or family visits.

Ortega, 75, is seeking a fourth consecutive term in Nov. 7 elections, and his six main potential rivals have been detained. Most face vague allegations of crimes against the state. Ortega alleges the country's April 2018 street protests were part of an organized coup attempt with foreign backing.

The coronavirus pandemic didn't stop the ruling Sandinista party from decorating plazas and stadiums with the party's black and red flags, and organizing concerts, baseball games



A youth carries a portrait of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega during commemorations for the anniversary of the triumph of the 1979 Sandinista Revolution that toppled dictator Anastasio Somoza in Managua, Nicaragua, late Sunday, July 18, 2021.

and public rallies.

Ortega's wife and vice president, Rosario Murillo, said some 5,000 events ranging from piñata parties for kids to baseball games have been scheduled. The parties began on Sunday night with fireworks and revolutionary-era music for thousands gathered at Managua's Plaza de la Fe.

"Thank God for this revolution that has represented struggles and victories for the dignity of the nation," Murillo said.

Those currently under arrest include 65-year-old Dora María Téllez, a former guerrilla commander who later split with Ortega and became a leader of the Sandinista Renovation Movement. Another jailed former Sandinista guerrilla and Renovation Movement leader, Hugo Torres, is 73.

"For us, it is shameful that they are marking July 19 by jailing heroes of the fight against Somoza, like Dora María Téllez, Víctor Hugo Tinoco and Hugo Torres,"

said Mónica Baltodano, herself a former guerrilla commander.

Tinoco, the leader of the political movement Unamos, is a former assistant foreign minister and former ambassador to the United Nations.

Tellez led a Sandinista assault on the National Palace in 1978, taking hostage members of Somoza's congress in exchange for the release of rebel prisoners. Following Somoza's overthrow, Tellez served as

health minister in the first Sandinista government, which ruled from 1979 to 1990.

In a sign of the times, Baltodano spoke to The Associated Press in a telephone interview from a "safe house" in an undisclosed location; she, too, fears she will be arrested soon.

"This regime is the opposite of all the utopia we fought for, and for which thousands of colleagues gave their lives," Baltodano said. Some who turned out for the festivities said their support for Ortega is unshaken. "We are here supporting the revolution, love, liberty, and harmony," said Cinthia Cardoza.

After the revolution ousted Somoza, Ortega initially ruled until 1990, when he lost an election after years of U.S.-backed attacks on his government.

He returned to the presidency in 2007 after three failed election attempts and won reelection in 2011. He then sidestepped term limits to get himself reelected in 2016, and packed courts and government agencies with allies. The Sandinista party controls the courts and the legislature, and has stifled universities and the Roman Catholic church. □

Associated Press

UAE's top prince in Saudi Arabia for talks with crown prince

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) —

Abu Dhabi's powerful crown prince visited Saudi Arabia for a meeting with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Monday following weeks of speculation about the growing rift between the two leaders. It came as their nations compete for business, regional investments and prominence. The meeting between Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, 60, and Prince Mohammed bin Salman, 35, also came a day after their energy ministers announced a compromise on oil production quotas that had been preceded by rare public commentary between the OPEC

allies. Both princes, whose nations sit on vast reserves of oil, are seen as de-facto

leaders of their respective countries. They oversee their country's armed forces

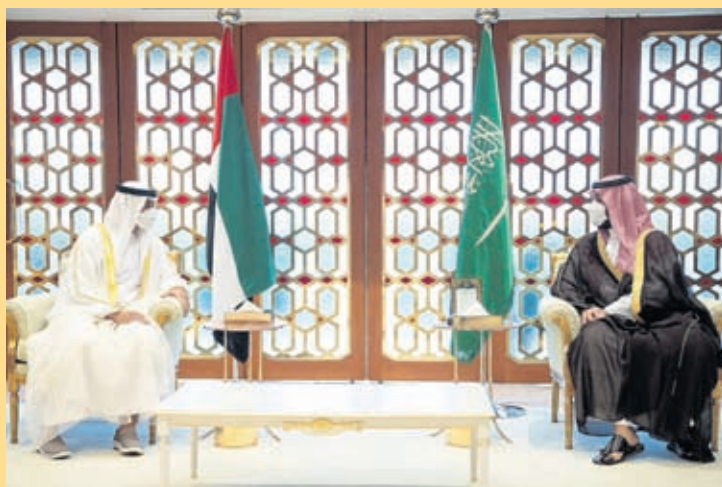
and wield control over intelligence and foreign policy.

Their meeting in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, was attended by a tight circle of three top officials from each side. The state-owned Saudi Press Agency reported few details about the meeting, describing it as a discussion on the "deep-rooted fraternal relations between the two countries" and "the latest regional and international developments."

The news agency reported that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman personally welcomed Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed upon his arrival to Riyadh.

The two princes once

shared a brotherly like bond, reportedly spending time on hunting trips in the desert as Abu Dhabi's crown prince mentored Saudi Arabia's ambitious and brazen heir to the throne. Prince Mohammed worked to model aspects of the kingdom's transformation on the successes of the United Arab Emirates. So close were the two de-facto leaders that Saudi Arabia and the UAE launched into a war in Yemen and cut ties with neighboring Qatar together. In late 2017, the two nations announced a new partnership to coordinate in all military, political, economic, trade and cultural fields. □



In this handout photograph from the United Arab Emirates' state-run WAM news agency, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, left, meets with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Monday, July 19, 2021.

Associated Press

Official: Haiti's interim prime minister to step down

By DÁNICA COTO

Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)

— Haiti's designated Prime Minister Ariel Henry will replace the country's interim prime minister to honor the wishes of the country's slain president, an official told The Associated Press on Monday.

It wasn't immediately clear how quickly interim Prime Minister Claude Joseph, who has been leading Haiti with the backing of police and the military since the July 7 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse, would step down.

"Negotiations are still in course," Haiti Elections Minister Mathias Pierre said, adding that Joseph would go back to being minister of foreign affairs.

Joseph could not be immediately reached for comment, and Henry did not return a message for comment. However, he released an audio recording in which he referred to himself as prime minister and called for unity.

Henry said he would soon



Haiti's interim Prime Minister Claude Joseph gives a press conference in Port-au-Prince, Friday, July 16, 2021, the week after the assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse's on July 7.

Associated Press

announce the members of what he called a provisional consensus government that would lead the country until elections are held.

"I present my compliments to the Haitian people who have shown political maturity in the face of what can be considered a coup. ... Our Haitian brothers gave peace a chance, while leaving the possibility that the truth could one day be restored," Henry said.

"Now it is up to all the national leaders to walk together in unity, towards the same goal, to show that they are responsible." The political turnover followed a statement Saturday from a key group of international diplomats that appeared to snub Joseph

as it called for the creation of "a consensual and inclusive government."

The Core Group is composed of ambassadors from Germany, Brazil, Canada, Spain, the U.S., France, the European Union and representatives from the United Nations and the Organization of American States.

Monique Clesca, a Haitian writer, activist and former U.N. official, said she doesn't anticipate any changes under Henry, whom she expects to carry on Moïse's legacy. But she warned Henry might be viewed as tainted because of the Core Group's involvement.

"If he accepts this, there is not only a perception, but the reality that he has been put there by the international community, and I think that's his burden to carry," she said.

"What we're calling for is for Haitians to really say this is unacceptable. We do not want the international community stating who ought to be in power and what ought to be done. It is up to us." □

UK gov't backs Guaidó claim in fight for Venezuelan gold

By DANICA KIRKA

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The British government sought Monday to prevent Venezuela's Nicolas Maduro from gaining access to nearly \$2 billion of gold held by the Bank of Eng-

land as the U.K. Supreme Court started hearing a case that hinges on the question of who should be considered the Latin American nation's president.

Britain told the court that its recognition of opposi-

tion leader Juan Guaidó as president is clear and longstanding, and therefore he is the person authorized to decide how the gold held by Britain's central bank should be used. The government's statement came after a lower court said the U.K.'s recognition of Guaidó was "ambiguous."

"The U.K. government has the right to decide who to recognize as the legitimate head of a foreign state," the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office said in a statement.

Maduro has demanded access to the gold to help his cash-starved nation fight the coronavirus pandemic. But the Bank of England has refused to hand it over, citing the British government's recognition of Guaidó. □



Juan Guaidó, the leader of Venezuela's National Assembly who says he is also the country's interim president, gives a press conference in Caracas, Venezuela on Dec. 7, 2020, left, and Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro speaks in Caracas, Venezuela on Jan. 22, 2021.

Associated Press

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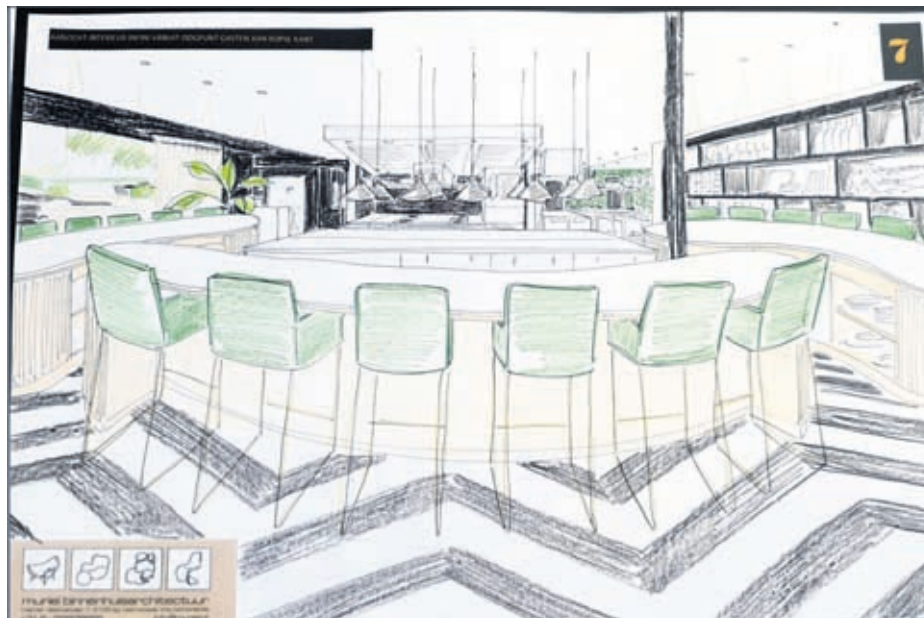
New beginnings after the kitchen table and beyond with new restaurant: Infini by Chef Urvin Croes

PALM BEACH — After spearheading The Kitchen Table for five years, receiving notable recognitions in USA Today, The Daily Meal and earning the #1 spot on Tripadvisor's list of Fine Dining Restaurants in the Caribbean, Chef Urvin Croes has now moved on to higher heights. Infini, his new chef's table, which opened at the Blue Residences in November 2020, allows the Michelin-trained Aruban culinary artist to create gastronomic experiences unconfined by cultural or regional expectations. The former The Kitchen Table space has since been renovated into a suitable culinary studio to host this vision. In describing these changes, Croes says: "We opened up the entire kitchen and elevated the dining tables so guests have a front row stadium-like view of each step of the preparations. The spotlights, which we carefully choreograph, follow the plates' transition from blank canvas into culinary works of art."

"It is a flavor that you cannot define, but you can create."

He had been sitting on the first menu for over a year. Inspired by umami, one of the five basic tastes, and also Japanese for "essence of deliciousness", Chef Croes strived to organically produce this palate in each dish of the eight-course Chef's Impression. "It is a flavor that you cannot define, but you can create. Take our popular langoustine for example; we combined elements that are rarely paired together: the bitter, sour and salty flavors of the lemon cream, kombucha, green grapes, watercress and achiote, fused with the sweet and delicate taste of the langoustine induce ultimate umami."

After hosting the first menu for three months, the Executive Chef introduced a second tour de force in February 2021 — this time a pes-



catarian menu dedicated to Lent, of which Croes has to say: "I wanted to focus on the finest fish in the world, they are the protagonists of this season." Visitors can experience the second Chef's Impression until May 2021, at which point Croes and his team will reveal exciting new flavors for the summer.

"Without a great team, there is no great chef"

"There is very little I can do by myself. Without a great team, there is no great chef", says Croes, while raving about the six young professionals sharing his kitchen. All graduates of Aruba's EPI College and familiar faces to the Chef as each one has completed their culinary internship under his guidance. In fact, Infini's Chef de Cuisine, Ashwin Maduro, was Urvin's very first student, before relocating to Amsterdam, where he worked at several Michelin-starred restaurants, including &moshik (formally &Samhoud Places). Having recently re-



turned to Aruba, Chef Maduro is thrilled to be reunited with his first mentor and hopes to secure Aruba's space on the global map of unique culinary experiences. Similarly, after four years working in the two-Michelin starred restaurant Spectrum, Chef de Partie Moises Ramirez returned home to share his vast experience in formulating recipes with meticulous attention to detail and consistency. Further down the kitchen line, Chef de Partie Alvaro Yi, who has worked at the two-Michelin starred FG Restaurant, is all about expressing himself through cooking and plating to create art that you can eat. Mixologist Marc-Anthony Rannis brings eight years of experience in the fine dining industry to Infini. His fine craftsmanship is displayed in the unparalleled wine pairings and signature cocktails, which include his personally homemade syrups, garnishes and fresh local ingredients. Maître D' and Junior Sommelier Jessica Theysen, who previously



managed renowned Chef Dennis Huwaë's Restaurant Daalder in Amsterdam, is a true storyteller. From the moment she serves the Salinity welcome drink and the culinary tale begins, she takes you on an adventure around the world to discover never-before-tasted combinations. Then, towards the end of the night, it is his time to shine — Pastry Chef Jean-Claude Werleman, that is. After spending the last two years perfecting his recipes in the Pastry Department of the Ritz Carlton Aruba, Werleman joins Infini to continue exploring his passion for experimenting with colors and bold flavors.

"It's time to show that Aruba is a culinary destination of its own"

"The goal is to leave our visitors speechless. The look on their faces whenever they take the first bite says it all and it is priceless", shares Croes, with a smile. Reclaiming the spot of number one restaurant in the Caribbean is also in sight, but this time he will not stop there. "In the end, we want Aruba to be recognized for its culinary mastery. We have trained the best culinary artists right here on the island and they have proven themselves internationally in the most renowned kitchens in the world. Now it is time to show that Aruba is a culinary destination of its own. Who knows where that will take us; hopefully to infinity and beyond."

Infini located at Blue Residences currently serves an eight-course Chef's Impression to up to 21 guests starting at 6:30PM. To make reservations visit www.infiniaruba.com or call +297-699-3982. □



infini
by Urvin Croes



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Commit yourself to a plastic-free July

ORANJESTAD - Are you aware of the law that prohibits the use of environmentally harmful products? Did you know that the **National Ordinance Prohibition of Environmentally Harmful Products (AB2019No.67)** prohibits the use of single-use plastic? Read more about this law that regulates which products are prohibited from importing, purchasing or giving away single-use plastic products.

For the month of July, the Nature and Environment Directorate, as in previous years, is proposing a challenge for the use or purchase of plastic products. The platform www.plasticfreejuly.org has a challenge available to help those who want to change their daily habits of using plastic products. Advice is available on the platform on how to successfully achieve this change, but it helps with how to avoid using plastic products and for how long. It also includes an option where each participant can set their level at which he or she considers themselves to take the

next step. Entrants can select the time frame they want to be part of the challenge for, either for a day, a week, or the entire month of July or even from now on. Share the link with your friends on your personal social media so that others can know about the challenge you are participating in.

- Party balloons or balloons used in fishing. It is inevitable that these balloons end up in the ocean and are eaten by sea turtles and fish. This is deadly for these species, but also for humans if they enter our food chain. Humans can eat fish that contain microplastics. Global research has already shown that our food already contains microplastics. It is recommended to use other types of decorations and to fish in a more sustainable way.
- Plastic soda, water and fruit juice bottles. Most people throw away their empty plastic bottles after consumption. These can be reused by refilling them with tap water. Another

option is to buy these products in glass bottles or cardboard tetra packaging.

- Plastic flowers used for decorations or at funerals. Use fresh flowers or donate to a foundation.
- Plastic confetti that is also used as decoration is prohibited and can be replaced with paper confetti. Foam sheets are also made of plastic and can be replaced with textiles.
- Plastic pie boxes can be replaced with cardboard or reusable boxes.
- Disposable face masks can be replaced by reusable face masks.
- Personal hygiene products: Sanitary pads can be replaced with the menstrual cup. Instead of disposable diapers, use reusable diapers, use Q-tips with wooden or paper sticks. Avoid buying plastic floss sticks and disposable razors.
- Refuse coffee cup lids, use your own reusable coffee mug. Refuse stirrers or plastic straws.



There are wooden stirrers or bring your own reusable stirrer.

July is the month dedicated to raising awareness about using plastic products to help you take real action. By taking on challenges like plasticfreejuly.org, you help reduce the amount of waste and pollution that ends up in the landfills at Parkietenbos and Sero Teishi. The DNM thanks those who have already made the transition to a plastic-free world and have risen to the challenge. Only together can we be the change and be part of the solution to reduce plastic pollution that seriously damages the environment and the world we live in. □

Aruba to me...

You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes



without compensation. Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today's newspaper we received a great picture from **Brian and Susan Holt** from Tempe, Arizona.

They wrote:

"Aruba to us is Paradise & our 2nd Home." □

Prepaid High-Speed Internet anywhere on the island

ORANJESTAD — Are you in Aruba for "Workation" and need high-speed Internet anywhere at any time? SETAR, Aruba's biggest telecom provider, offers you the fastest wireless Internet plans on an LTE network.

Work remotely on the beach via your tablet, laptop, or smartphone and enjoy faster upload and download speeds. SETAR Prepaid Wireless Broadband offers you a lower latency rate, meaning websites loads faster, YouTube does not pause every five seconds, and apps download at a higher speed, all using



your Mi-Fi device. SETAR Wireless Broadband Prepaid offers you Internet anywhere for a fixed fee without worrying about additional charges, and it is easy to use and access. Choose the bundle that suits your budget and needs.

Visit SETAR Teleshop with locations around the island or at the airport to check your Mi-Fi SIM or device. □



Article by Etnia Nativa

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Art with roots

Episode CXIII - 113

NOORD - It is difficult, if not impossible, to come up with an entirely original concept in Art and when we associate art with archeology it is because we have a natural interest and love for our ancestors and their survival challenges. To reproduce rock art there must be an originality that is difficult to define within the conventional limitations of that tradition. This unusual task of reproducing prehistoric art has to free itself from the postmodern political burden and at the same time not be reactionary, which is no small thing in conservative times.

Aruban art rock inspired paintings, in particular, have an uncanny ability to tread the aesthetic and political fault-line between the Western colonial perspective and that of the Aruban cultural and the indigenous landscape memory. All these arts work is indicative of a more sophisticated re-invigoration of the islands indigenous aspect which is gaining force in contemporary art circles. The featured works have an approach of depicting Aruba's prehistoric culture with its mixed finishes and its non-traditional use of the material in its contemporary nuances by adding to this idea as much collected material as possible and experimenting with seeds, clay, feathers, bones, metal, wood, glass, discarded paints and stones to name a few and manage to create works that show even more explicitly to their aesthetic ease with color and composition.

In conventional art, the viewer recognizes the iconography of traditional masters, while art that evokes a prehistoric artistic past uses unique forms, creating an almost surreal way of looking at what has been seen before. Being paintings already seen attracts the viewer towards



the image and, at the same time, the images themselves look back at origins, while captivating the viewer's attention, for good or for bad.

The more a viewer looks at a work of art related to archeology, the more he realizes its uniqueness; generally works that combine authentic techniques with surrealistic touches that make their finish result in a fresh and

interesting expression. Each part of the archaeological inspired artwork emerges independently, and it is this strangely ambiguous aspect of the overall composition that is particularly fascinating. The curiosity motivating the capture of a native Aruban sense of existence, free of external influence. In this way and in a more nuanced sense, each recycling work is related to nature and the fascination by island past cultures. Each art painting is studio-based the end-product significantly departs from any empirical image. In the same way, while these figurative work references to native pottery designs and rock art the result is a more cohesive practice then may be initially apparent.

Etnia Nativa presents an anthropological approach to what we can call ancient Aruban natural relations using art in order to understand the indigenous aesthetic creation of island native expressions. □

To get to know more over Aruba's and its origins, its animals and culture, we highly recommend you to book your visit for our renowned cultural encounter session has been entertaining curious participants for decades.

Mail us at etnianativa03@gmail.com to confirm your participation. Our facilities and activities take place close to high rise hotels.



We deserve a better credit reporting system

By **LIZ WESTON**
of NerdWallet

In some ways, the U.S. credit reporting system has improved. Credit freezes, which lock our credit information to deter identity theft, are now free and fast. We have free weekly access to our credit reports, courtesy of the credit bureaus Equifax, Experian and TransUnion, until April 20, 2022. Free credit scores provided by banks, credit card issuers and other companies allow us to easily monitor for signs of fraud and other problems.

Unfortunately, our credit information still isn't as accurate, easy to obtain or secure as it needs to be. These failures mean Congress and regulators need to step in.

ERRORS ABOUND IN CREDIT REPORTS

A 2012 study by the Federal Trade Commission found that 26% of consumers had an error on at least one of their credit reports, while 5% reported inaccuracies serious enough to potentially trigger higher interest rates or insurance premiums.

Nine years later, accuracy is still an issue. Earlier this year, Consumer Reports recruited nearly 6,000 volunteers to check their reports. The results: 34% found at least one error or account they didn't recognize. (Unlike the longer-term FTC study, the Consumer Reports effort was not a representative sample of the



This undated file photo provided by NerdWallet shows Liz Weston, a columnist for the personal finance website. (NerdWallet via Associated Press)

population, says Syed Ejaz, a policy analyst and author of the Consumer Reports study.)

There simply aren't enough incentives for credit bureaus to get things right. Their primary customers are financial institutions that can profit if someone who's creditworthy gets charged a higher rate because of a mistake, says independent journalist Bob Sullivan, author of "Your Evil Twin: Behind the Identity Theft Epidemic."

"We say it all the time, but I feel like it's never said enough: We are not their customers. Banks are their customers," Sullivan says.

Because business interests

dwarf consumers' concerns, the government needs to step in. The FTC and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau should establish stronger accuracy regulations and enforce the ones already on the books, Ejaz says.

CREDIT BUREAUS PROFIT FROM CONSUMER CONFUSION

Search for "free credit report," "annual credit report" or even "AnnualCreditReport.com." The first results are likely to be ads for other sites that shill credit monitoring. The real site is often halfway down the page, with no indication that it's the official, federally mandated place to get

free credit reports.

People are understandably confused when they click on the other links and are asked for a credit card often after they've input sensitive information, including their Social Security number and birthdate. (The real site doesn't require a credit card.) They're even more dismayed when their supposedly free credit reports turn into a recurring subscription that could cost \$20 to \$40 a month.

The real site should be the first search result for keywords related to free credit reports. Also, any company buying ads for these keywords should be required to have a prominent button saying something like, "Looking for AnnualCreditReport.com? Click here" with a link to the correct site. The search engines, credit bureaus and other companies selling credit monitoring are unlikely to do this on their own, so lawmakers need to act.

While we're at it, let's ditch the idea that access to our credit reports should be only once a year, or whatever cadence the bureaus decree. It's our data, typically collected without our permission and with no way to opt out. If the credit bureaus won't expand our access, Congress should.

IDENTITY VERIFICATION SYSTEMS BLOCK THE WRONG PEOPLE

More than one out of 10 people in the Consumer

Reports study said it was "difficult" or "very difficult" to get their credit reports, often because they couldn't answer the bureaus' identity verification questions.

You know who doesn't have trouble with those questions? Identity thieves. They use information culled from database breaches, such as the massive one at Equifax that exposed sensitive financial data of most adult Americans, to access people's credit reports with relative ease.

"You don't remember who holds your mortgage because it's been sold five times. But a criminal has got all the information right in front of them," Sullivan says.

Sullivan has some sympathy for the credit bureaus. Finding the right balance between security and convenience can be tough.

One solution is to make the information in credit reports, primarily Social Security numbers, less valuable. These numbers were meant to track our earnings history, not to be an all-purpose identifier. Stolen Social Security numbers allow criminals to open fraudulent credit accounts, steal tax refunds, get medical care using someone else's insurance and even pose as someone else if they get arrested. Other countries have separate identification systems for different uses; so should we. □

Pandemic recession ended in April 2020, shortest on record

By **CHRISTOPHER RUGABER**
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — It hit like a derailed train, was hugely destructive but short-lived. The recession that broke out with the onset of the coronavirus pandemic lasted just two months, officially ended in April 2020. That makes it the shortest downturn on record, according to the committee of economists that determines when recessions begin and end.

The U.S. economy reached a peak in February 2020, the National Bureau of Economic Research's Business Cycle Dating Committee said Monday. The recession began the following month and ended in April.

The NBER said the recession ended that month because that is when the economy reached its lowest point in terms of jobs and output. The end of the recession does not mean the economy was fully recovered. It only began to rebound in May 2020, the committee said.

The recovery has continued in fits and starts for the past year and by some measures is nearly complete. The economy's output of goods and services likely reached its pre-pandemic level in the April-June quarter, analysts estimate. □



In this Dec. 18, 2020, file photo, a person passes the office of the California Employment Development Department in Sacramento, Calif.

Associated Press

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 40 Debate

1 Desire topic

5 Trombone 41 Handy-part man's

10 Notions collection

12 Choir 42 Pottery member piece

13 Lesser 43 Pants part crime

15 Poker 1 Pushovers prize

16 Wee bite 2 Figures of

17 Moody speech music

18 Does 3 Sonnet part refinery work

20 Gaze 4 Owned 19 Espresso 33 Tightly

21 Flag 7 Wanting 25 Wise 38 Cat coat features

22 Throws in 8 Sure to fail 26 Sumptuous (Ke\$ha hit)

23 Printing goofs

25 Mailbox part

28 Leading 31 Walk through water

32 ATM part

34 Broad st.

35 Cruise setting

36 Uno plus due

37 Machine failure

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Yesterday's answer

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11 Gate port

29 Choice

30 Convict's

14 Not well-articulated hope

19 Espresso 33 Tightly

5 Dance bit order packed

6 Michele of 20 Ashen 35 Took to

"Glee" 24 Short play court

7 Wanting 25 Wise 38 Cat coat

8 Sure to fail 26 Sumptuous (Ke\$ha hit)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
10 11 12
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18 19 20 21 22
23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39
40 41 42 43

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

7-20 **CRYPTOQUOTE**

BC'Y KA OPDCFZ EBN YICQHY

ECSS NO KC RCBDFZ KA

RQLH. — XBNKQY OVSSCP

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: GOOD COMMUNICATION IS JUST AS STIMULATING AS BLACK COFFEE. AND JUST AS HARD TO SLEEP AFTER. — ANNE MORROW LINDBERGH



In this Jan. 14, 2021 photo made available by Blue Origin, the New Shepard NS-14 rocket lifts off from Launch Site One in West Texas.

Associated Press

EXPLAINER: How Blue Origin's Jeff Bezos will soar into space

By MARCIA DUNN
AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — When Blue Origin launches people into space for the first time, founder Jeff Bezos will be on board. No test pilots or flight engineers for Tuesday's debut flight from West Texas, just Bezos, his brother, an 82-year-old aviation pioneer and a teenage tourist.

The capsule is entirely automated, unlike Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic rocket plane that required two pilots to get him to space and back a week ago.

Branson's advice? "Just sit back, relax, look out of the window, just absorb the view outside," he said on CBS' "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert."

Differences in quirks and rockets aside, the billionaire rivals are gearing up to launch just about anybody willing to shell out hundreds of thousands of dollars for a brief up-and-down space hop.

A brief look at what awaits Bezos and his passengers:

BEZOS ON BOARD

Bezos created Blue Origin in 2000, a move that he said prompted his high school girlfriend to observe, "Jeff started Amazon just to get enough money to do Blue Origin and I can't prove her wrong." He has said he finances the rocket company by selling \$1 billion in Amazon stock a year. Bezos caught the space bug at age 5 while watching Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin's moon landing on July, 20, 1969. He chose the 52nd anniversary for his own launch. Enamored by space history, Bezos named his New Shepard rocket after Alan Shepard, the first American in space, and his bigger, still-in-development New Glenn rocket after John Glenn, the first American in orbit. The 57-year-old Bezos, who also owns The Washington Post, stepped down as Amazon's CEO earlier this month and last week donated \$200 million to the

Smithsonian Institution to renovate its National Air and Space Museum and launch an education center. "To see the Earth from space, it changes you. It changes your relationship with this planet, with humanity," he said. "It's a thing I've wanted to do all my life."

WHO ELSE IS FLYING

Bezos personally invited two of his fellow passengers: his 50-year-old brother Mark, an investor and volunteer firefighter, and female aviation pioneer Wally Funk. Joining them will be Oliver Daemen, a last-minute fill-in for the winner of a \$28 million charity auction who had a scheduling conflict. At age 82, Funk will become the oldest person in space. She was among 13 female pilots the so-called Mercury 13 who took the same tests in the early 1960s as NASA's Mercury 7 astronauts, but were barred because of their gender. "Finally!" Funk exclaimed when offered a seat alongside Bezos. As for the Dutch Daemen, who at 18 will become the youngest person in space his financier father bid on the capsule seat in June, but dropped out when the price soared. Blue Origin came calling just over a week ago, after the unidentified auction winner switched to a later flight. The teenage space fanatic, who starts college this fall, is Blue Origin's first paying customer; no word on what his ticket cost.

ROCKET AND CAPSULE

While Bezos won't be the first boss to ride to space on his own rocket, he can lay claim to strapping in for his company's first human launch. He's also aiming higher, with an anticipated altitude of about 66 miles (106 kilometers) versus Branson's 53.5 miles (86 kilometers). Blue Origin's 60-foot (18-meter) New Shepard rocket will accelerate toward space at three times the speed of sound, or Mach 3, before separating from the capsule and returning for an upright landing. □



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Editor

Caribbean Speed Printers N.V.
Aruba Bank N.V. Acc. #332668
Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V.
Acc. #23951903
RBC Royal Bank Acc. #1330772

Assistant Director

Xiomara Arends

Editors

Liza Koolman (Management assistant)

Richard Brooks

Linda Reijnders

Sales

Linda Reijnders

(linda.reijnders@cspnv.com)

Sulaika Croes

Classifieds

classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection

accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website

Juan Luis Pinto

Pilar Flores

Columnists

Anthony Croes

Joris Zantvoort

Thais Franken

Weststraat 22
T: 582-7800

E: news@arubatoday.com

W: www.arubatoday.com

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Look back in laughter: 'The Daily Show' celebrates at 25

By **MARK KENNEDY**

AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Long before there was fake news, there was a fake news show.

Comedy Central's "The Daily Show" launched 25 years ago this month, dedicated to skewering journalism and warning viewers about how they take in their news.

"We became the watchdogs of the watchdog," said co-creator Lizz Winstead. "Nobody had done it before so the world was our oyster."

Over the years, "The Daily Show" first hosted by Craig Kilborn, then Jon Stewart and now Trevor Noah has skewered the left and right by making the media a character and playing it absolutely straight, no matter how ridiculous.

Co-creator Madeleine Smithberg explains their a-ha moment: "What if we pretend we are them? And the more serious we act, the absolute more ridiculous we can be? We can satirize the news industry along with the news."

Winstead and Smithberg are celebrating the silver anniversary on Monday with a 90-minute streaming celebration that will include special guests, a Q&A and appearances from the first correspondents: A. Whitney Brown, Beth Littleford and Brian Unger. Proceeds will benefit Abortion Access Front.

While Winstead left as head writer before Stewart took over as host in 1999, Smithberg stayed for more than seven years, hiring such key talent as Stephen Colbert, Steve Carell, Ed Helms, Rob Corddry, Mo Rocca and Lewis Black.

The co-creators built a show that would go on to win dozens of Emmys, two Peabody Awards and honors from the Writer's Guild, the NAACP and GLAAD. They established a format that proved sturdy enough to outlast various hosts.

"They got to just move into the house and not worry about the plumbing and not worry about the roof.



In this combination photo, Craig Kilborn, former host of "The Daily Show," appears at the premiere of "Old School" in Los Angeles on Feb. 13, 2003, from left, Jon Stewart appears during a taping of "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart" in New York on Nov. 30, 2011 and Trevor Noah appears during a taping of "The Daily Show with Trevor Noah" in New York on Sept. 29, 2015.

Associated Press

What they could just do is start decorating and then start adding to it and then just really having the parties they wanted," said Winstead.

The show was an evolutionary leap from previous attempts to skewer news like "That Was the Week That Was," "Weekend Update" on "Saturday Night Live" and HBO's "Not Necessarily the News." But despite its popularity and endurance, neither co-creator sees much change in the way TV news operates.

"We couldn't have handed the media a bigger mirror with which to look at themselves and say, 'I guess we need to self-correct,'" said Winstead. "And instead, a lot of cable news was like, 'Oh, what people want in the news is wacky graphics.'"

Winstead had always been a comedian mining social and political humor, but it took the way CNN covered the first Gulf War that led her to "The Daily Show."

On the first night of the conflict Winstead was at a bar on an unfortunate blind date the cable network played martial music, threw up lots of snazzy graphics and seemed to relish the conflict.

"There was a purposefulness to making this cov-

erage seem almost like it was a video game or a TV show," she recalled. "I was thinking, 'Are they trying to report on a war or try to sell me a war?'"

She later happened to move into the same New York apartment building as Smithberg, who had worked on David Letterman's late-night show and was producing an MTV show with Stewart. Smithberg asked Winstead if she'd be a segment producer and she agreed. When that show was canceled, the two then went on to create "The Daily Show."

They pointed to two things that made their job easier. One, Comedy Central gave them a full year to work out the bugs, meaning less pressure for ratings and a workplace guarantee that could attract talent.

Second was the presence of Unger, a former CBS veteran who had become disillusioned with TV journalism. He taught the staff the tricks of the trade: The furrowed brow, the serious listening face, the nodding, the pursing of the lips and the camera turns. The working title of the show was never intended to be final but won by default. Options included "The Daily Scope,"

"The Daily Roundup" and even "The Daily Poop" but nothing felt right.

"We never came up with a better title. Basically, it was always called 'The Daily Show' because it was a description of what we were doing," said Smithberg.

The TV landscape when "The Daily Show" made its debut on July 22, 1996, was evolving. CNN was well-established, MSNBC had just started as a 24-hour network and Fox would follow. With not much to fill all those hours, many turned to prurient topics and became easy fodder for satire.

The show's long-term legacy as a talent incubator is sterling. It became a launching pad for the likes of Aasif Mandvi, Jon Oliver, Larry Wilmore, Jordan Klepper and Samantha Bee.

Critics have sometimes complained that "The Daily Show" has bred cynicism, a charge the co-creators reject. The show didn't intend to be a fact-checker or a truth-teller but morphed into one because the TV media devolved, they argue.

"Where people should have channeled their anger is at the media, whose job it is every single day in newspapers and in their 24-hour-news channels to

give us a smarter electorate," said Winstead.

Smithberg points to one moment in particular when the show seemed to turn a corner the 2000 U.S. election. When Florida became undecided, it triggered a weeklong recount that "The Daily Show" carefully detailed in all its absurdity. "It was during that time that 'The Daily Show,' as you know and love it, emerged," she said. "That's when the legitimate media really fell in love with us because we were the only ones that could show how not normal this situation was."

It ultimately led to fake journalists from "The Daily Show" being interviewed and featured by real journalists: "That was kind of a surreal moment because the show that's just like poking holes in the media is suddenly the media darling," said Smithberg. □



Ready or not: Short-handed U.S. basketball roster off to Tokyo

By TIM REYNOLDS
AP Basketball Writer

The U.S. Olympic men's basketball team has been together for two weeks. There have been six practices. The team played four exhibitions. A pair of roster changes have already been required and the Americans have no idea when three other players will join the team for the first time.

If that wasn't enough, shortly before they were scheduled to fly on Monday, they found out Zach LaVine has entered the health and safety protocols and wouldn't be accompanying them on the flight to Tokyo.

All that probably isn't the formula for Olympic success, but ready or not, Tokyo awaits.

"It's a little bit different," U.S. coach Gregg Popovich said.

No, it's a lot different. Unprecedented, really, just like almost everything else about these Tokyo Olympics that start on Friday. The U.S. the three-time defending men's basketball gold medalist was leaving Las Vegas on Monday for the trip to Japan, where it'll commence final preparations for the start of the Tokyo Games.

The plan is to have four more practices in Japan before opening Olympic play against France on July 25. The Americans have 12 names on the roster; only eight will be with the team for the trip to Japan because three Khris Middleton, Jrue Holiday and Devin Booker are still playing in the NBA Finals and LaVine is in the protocols. There is hope that LaVine will be able to join the team at some point in the not-too-distant future, but he wasn't



United States players celebrate after defeating Spain in an exhibition basketball game in preparation for the Olympics, Sunday, July 18, 2021, in Las Vegas.

cleared for Monday's flight. "I think all of us are better for the adversity we go through, because you either handle it or you don't," Popovich said. "You figure it out. And these guys have had to do that. They've kept their heads up. There might be a disappointment here or there, or an event that takes place, but they move on. And that's what life's all about. So, this is no different."

The adversity has come in bunches for the Americans. During their two-week stay in Las Vegas:

Bradley Beal was forced to leave the team for virus-related reasons and Kevin Love backed out because of an injury.

Jerami Grant was briefly in the health and safety protocols related to the virus and missed a few days.

Keldon Johnson was promoted from the Select Team (the players brought to Las Vegas so they could

practice against the Olympians) to replace Beal, and JaVale McGee was added to the roster to replace Love. McGee was with the team for Sunday's exhibition finale against Spain but did not play, meaning his first action with this team will be during actual Olympic competition.

Oh, and the Americans lost to Nigeria and Australia, had to cancel the rematch against the Australians, and for a brief while had only six of the 12 Olympic team members available in camp.

"We're still won't have those other three, but at this point that's not going to change," Popovich said. "We just have to persevere and find ways to keep them in shape even though we're not going to be able to execute too much very well.

So, we're going to have to figure out common denominators for this exact

group. Less is more, so to speak. Inventing the wheel would be the worst thing we can do for this group." Middleton, Holiday and Booker will play Tuesday night in Game 6 of the NBA Finals. If Milwaukee wins that game the Bucks, with Middleton and Holiday, lead Booker and the Phoenix Suns 3-2 in that series they would win the NBA title.

That would also mean the trio could be in Japan by the weekend, giving time to join the Americans for at least one practice in advance of the game against France.

If Phoenix forces Game 7, it would be Thursday night, the day before the opening ceremony in Tokyo, three days before the U.S.-France game.

A grueling playoff run is daunting enough on players; a grueling playoff run followed by a flight halfway around the world is not the recipe for fresh legs, so it's anyone's guess how effective Middleton, Holiday and Booker will be when they get to Japan.

Popovich doesn't know what to expect.

"I have no idea. You know, I'm not trying to be glib. I'm just totally transparent,"

Popovich said. "We've thought about, 'Are they going to have jet lag? Is it going to be like two days later after they land and they'll be OK?' ... In some ways, it might depend on if everybody else is healthy. If they're not, they've got to play. So, we've gone over lots of scenarios. We haven't figured it out yet, that's for sure."

And that's a rarity, Popovich being at a loss for answers.

"He takes it very seriously," said Johnson, who also plays for Popovich with the Spurs.

The five-time NBA champion as San Antonio's coach has matched wits with 11 different members of the Basketball Hall of Fame in his career. The Spurs have won 60% of those games, a fancy way of saying that the best minds to ever coach the game lose three of every five times they face Popovich. He has a history of having the answers.

But as he heads to Tokyo, for an Olympics amid a pandemic, without fans and without one-quarter of his roster, even he's still scratching his head.

Plus, the U.S. opener in Tokyo is no cakewalk France is the team that ousted the U.S. from medal contention at the 2019 Basketball World Cup in China, the tournament that was Popovich's debut as the head coach of the American program.

And Popovich, who typically doesn't reveal anything by accident, said Sunday night that the Americans have been preparing for France "for two years," a clear nod to what happened in China.

"We still have a long way to go," Popovich said. "And we've got another week before we play, so, although that's not a long time ... I think it's wonderful because we need that time.

So, hopefully we'll continue to improve during the week, and be ready to play a very good French team." □



Cowher caps unlikely success story with Hall of Fame nod

By **WILL GRAVES**
AP Sports Writer

On the surface, Bill Cowher looked like he wasn't ready to be an NFL head coach. Too young. Too anonymous. Too unproven.

So while the then-34-year-old Cowher might have been on the list to replace Chuck Noll following Noll's retirement after the 1991 season, thanks to the enthusiastic endorsement of mentor Marty Schottenheimer, he wasn't exactly at the top of it.

"We thought we were going to need somebody older," said Art Rooney II, the team's vice president at the time Noll stepped away.

Yet there was something about Cowher's manner that stuck with Rooney and his father, team chairman Dan Rooney, as they set about finding someone to take over for the most successful coach in franchise history. The more the Rooneys talked to the former special teamer who grew up four miles from Three Rivers Stadium, the more they were won over by Cowher's combination of intelligence and charisma.

"You could see he was somebody who was going to be able to command



Pittsburgh Steelers head coach Bill Cowher reacts on the center stage after the Steelers' 21-10 win over the Seattle Seahawks in the Super Bowl XL football game in Detroit, in this Sunday, Feb. 5, 2006, file photo.

the team, have the presence to stand in front of a group of twentysomethings every day and keep their attention," said Art Rooney, now the team president. That was something Cowher did for 15 seasons, 170 wins, one Super Bowl title and an appearance in another. His jaw jutting out from underneath a moustache that gave him an

everyman blue-collar vibe, Cowher re-established the Steelers as one of the league's marquee franchises with a style as impassioned as Noll's was professorial. "You know, you follow a guy like Chuck Noll, I don't even think there's any pressure, because you're not even going to come close to doing what he did in terms of ... the run

they had in the '70s, what he did for the city of Pittsburgh and rejuvenating that whole city," Cowher said.

Maybe, but Cowher came pretty close. And 15 years after stepping away, Cowher will follow in Noll's footsteps once again when he is inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame next month. Not bad for a former

linebacker who spent his brief four-year NFL career in the early 1980s as a special teams ace who got by more on guile and innate football IQ than athletic ability.

"I just was very average skill set but I knew how to do all the little things to get by," Cowher said. "And so, that was my idea. I was like a teacher. I always liked teaching. And teaching is finding a way to connect with your students, and those were the players, those were the coaches, and so I embraced it all."

Schottenheimer hired Cowher as an assistant in Cleveland in 1985 and the two headed west to Kansas City in 1989. Cowher spent two years as the defensive coordinator for the Chiefs, and when the Steelers started exploring who would lead them into the post-Noll era, Schottenheimer gave Cowher a rousing endorsement.

"Even though he was that young, Marty felt really good about him being ready to go," Rooney said. And he was. Cowher's impact on the Steelers was immediate. They made the playoffs in each of his first six seasons, reaching the 1996 Super Bowl before falling to the Dallas Cowboys. □

Associated Press

Nobel Peace Prize winner says Olympics deserves the award

TOKYO (AP) — The Olympic movement deserves to win the Nobel Peace Prize, former award winner Muhammad Yunus said Monday.

Yunus, a Bangladeshi banker who was awarded his Nobel in 2006 for pioneering micro-credit loans to impoverished people, has worked with the International Olympic Committee on a business program for athletes.

"I think it has a very good case to establish itself as a candidate," Yunus said in an online conference call ahead of receiving an Olympic award at the

opening ceremony of the Tokyo Games on Friday. Yunus cited North and South Korean athletes marching under one flag at the opening ceremony of the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Games as an example of the Olympics using sports to create peace.

"If that is not peace-making I don't know what it is," Yunus said. "Definitely the Olympics has a tremendous reason to believe it can win the peace prize one day."

His comments came seven months before the 2022 Beijing Winter Games, which activists have

branded the "Genocide Games" because of China's treatment of Muslim minority Uyghur people in the western Xinjiang region.

Asked Monday if sports should be rewarding or engaging with China, Yunus referred to the ancient tradition of the Olympic truce revived by the modern Olympic Games.

"The whole spirit of the Olympics is to get together," he said of the truce in ancient Greece that allowed free passage of athletes and spectators from rival city-states to attend the event and return



Workers take their break near the Olympics Village for Beijing 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games and Paralympic Winter Games, during a media tour in Zhangjiakou in northwestern China's Hebei province on Wednesday, July 14, 2021.

Associated Press

home. "After the Olympics truce is over, go back if you want to whatever you want to do, where you are coming from."

On Friday, Yunus will re-

ceive the IOC's Olympic Laurel award, which recognizes people for their work in education, development and peace in sport. □